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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON, DC 20350-2000

IN REPLY REFER TO

OPNAVINST 3120.28B
OP-353H
21 October 1991

OPNAV INSTRUCTION 3120.28B

From: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: CERTIFICATION OF THE AVIATION CAPABILITY OF SHIPS
OPERATING AIRCRAFT

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 3120.35F
(b) OPNAVINST 4720.2E

1. Purpose. To provide procedures and delineate responsibilities for the formal inspection and certification of shipboard aviation facilities and aircraft operating envelopes.

2. Cancellation. OPNAVINST 3120.28A.

3. Scope. This instruction applies to all ships whose mission includes the conduct of flight operations.

4. Background. Certification is a process established to verify: a) shipboard aviation facilities are installed, available, and operated according to approved plans and procedures; and b) safe operating envelopes for wind and ship motion are established. Both are essential to the proper, adequate, and safe conduct of flight operations.

(R)

5. Discussion. Many aspects of air and surface warfare have changed over the years and have brought about various naval ships configured for different purposes. Differences in missions and capabilities of equipment have dictated a wide variety of shipboard aviation facilities and operating envelopes. The type and number of ships capable of conducting flight operations have resulted in the need for formal, standard certification procedures to provide the maximum safe environment for both aircraft and ship's personnel.

(R)

a. The primary objective of the shipboard aviation facility certification process is to validate by inspection the facilities, equipment, and their operating capabilities for



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proper, adequate, and safe conduct of flight operations. Therefore, all procedures, documentation, and technical guidelines shall reflect the level, class, and type requirements defined in reference (a) and follow the ship's aviation mission as established by the Chief of Naval Operations.

b. The primary objective of the aircraft operating envelope certification process is to establish and validate by flight test, analysis or simulation the complete wind and ship motion envelopes for safe aircraft operation.

c. All aviation capable ships shall have certified aviation facilities with certified aircraft operating envelopes. It shall be noted that the certification of a ship's aviation capability does not constitute authorization to conduct air operations. Authorization to conduct air operations in naval ships is the responsibility of the Fleet Commanders.

6. Action

a. Commander, Naval Air Systems Command or Program Executive Officer shall:

(1) Establish responsibilities, procedures, and technical guidelines for mandatory facility and operating envelope certifications based on three distinct types of afloat aviation capable ships:

Aviation (CV/CVN);

Amphibious Aviation (LPH/LHA/LHD); and

Air Capable (all other ships from which aircraft can takeoff, land, or routinely receive or transfer personnel/materials).

(2) Assign responsibilities to subordinate naval activities to achieve and support the objectives of certification.

(3) Provide technical guidelines, personnel, data, and funding for the support of formal inspection and flight test programs associated with aviation capability certifications.

(4) Budget Aviation Procurement, Navy (APN) funds to support Dynamic Interface Testing for each aviation capable class of ship that new or existing aircraft are planned to be operated from.

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(5) Ensure that proposals for modification of the certification criteria are processed in accordance with the policy promulgated by the latest reference (b).

(6) Procure equipment to support the aviation systems required for certification. Provide installation guidelines to support shipboard aviation capabilities at or above certification standards.

(7) Approve all aviation facility design/modifications before installation to insure that the objectives of existing and projected aviation facility certification standards will be achieved.

(8) Maintain direct liaison with fleet commanders in chief on certification matters.

b. Commander, Naval Sea Systems Command (COMNAVSEASYS COM) or Program Executive Officer shall:

(1) Procure equipment to support the ship systems required for certification. Install, modify, and maintain all shipboard facilities and associated equipment under reference (b) to support shipboard aviation capabilities at or above certification standards.

(2) Provide personnel, data, and funding for support of formal inspections of NAVSEA cognizant equipment associated with aviation capability certifications.

(3) Budget Ship Construction, Navy (SCN) funds to support Dynamic Interface Testing for aviation capable lead ships of each class and subsequent follow ships as appropriate where baseline class changes have affected the ship's flight deck characteristics.

c. Fleet Commanders in Chief shall:

(1) Establish responsibilities and procedures necessary for mandatory certification of all ships with aviation facilities within the technical guidelines issued by the Commander, Naval Air Systems Command (COMNAVAIRSYSCOM). Certification shall be subject to periodic review at intervals determined by COMNAVAIRSYSCOM.


(2) Authorize aircraft operations aboard ship to meet established and special mission requirements.

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(3) In cases where certification is not possible without inordinate operational disruption, authorize on a case-by-case basis, operational waivers to aviation facility certification criteria. Certification criteria waivers shall be granted for a specified period of time and shall not abrogate safety considerations. In any case, the waiver period shall not exceed 1 year from the date of waiver authorization. Follow-on waivers shall not be granted until an appropriate inspection of the aviation facilities has been accomplished and corrective measures initiated.

(a) For ships operating under waivers, corrective measures shall be included in the list of repairs and/or alterations to be accomplished during the next major yard availability period. The priority for accomplishing these alterations will be established following the Fleet Modernization Program (FMP).

(b) Copies of all waivers issued shall be provided to the COMNAVAIRSYSCOM (AIR 551) and to the COMNAVSEASYSYSCOM.


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